

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** VICMIL@aol.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 19, 2000 7:02 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video.

My ten year old son loves descriptive video. He has never had any sight and cannot apply past visual input to what he hears on television or in the movies. In theatres, we must whisper important visual cues. This limits his independence. Please remember that more premature and sick infants survive their birth experience every year. Many of these children will have a visual impairment. This means that there are now more blind children who will soon become blind adults. Please remember the children when you consider funding for descriptive video.

I support descriptive video. Victoria Gorman Miller  
3910 Pocahontas Ave.  
Cincinnati , OH 45227

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** debbie ralston [sunnydisco@mediaone.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 19, 2000 7:46 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** support dvs

Debbie Ralston

52 Cypress St.

Manchester, NH

legally blind-visually impaired

I support the FCC rule mm docket no.99-339. The blind community needs to have dvs included in movies or television when it is produced. I can follow a movie or show so much better with the dvs because I know what is happening & what the characters look like. I can watch a movie or television by myself & follow it like anyone sighted person. I owned video cassette movies with dvs & enjoy watching them so much because I can follow the action. It would not cost any more to add dvs when a movie or television show is being produced. I need to have dvs in everything that I watch be it either a motion movie or a television show.

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:05 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Paul Hubbard, I am blind and I live at the Mary Bryant Home, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Doccket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:07 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My nname is Barb Keith, I am blind and I reside at the Mary Bbryant Home for the Blind, 2960 tanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:09 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Lillian Kirby, I am blind and I reside at the Mary Bryant Home for the Blind, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive Video MM Docket No.99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:11 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Florence Lasley, I am blind and I reside at the Mary Bryant Home, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:12 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Chris Long, I am blind and I reside at the mary Bbryant Home,  
2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules  
for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:28 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Mae Lowery, I am blind and I resides at the Mary Bryant Home,  
2960 Stanton Ave, Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules  
for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339



## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:30 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Stan Lucas, I am blind and I resides at the Mary Bryant Home for the Blind, 2960 Stanton Avenue, Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:32 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Doris Magers, I am blind and I reside at the Mary Bryant Home for the Blind, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** George S McDermott [revgeo@eudoramail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 9:02 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support Descriptive video

the Rev. George KS. McDermott  
P. O. Box 17187, Main Street kStation  
kWorcester, Massachusetts 01601-7187  
(508) 795-1118

I would like to lend my support to the kFederal kCommunications Commission proposed Descriptive Video rules, MM document 99-339 which would request the movie industry as well as Television networks and Cable TV to include descriptive audio track to their programming and all movies. I am totally blind, and find that when I am alone watching television, it is not always possible for me to know what is going on on the screen. It is my belief and feeling that I should have the same privileges as those who are sighted to not only to understand what is happening when there is no dialogue, as to know emotional reactions facially etc. It enhances my own independence to be able to share with others following a film or other program some of the events going on that were not part of the dialogue. It also frees up other members of my household from having to spend their time describing what is happening and thus would make it possible for them to enjoy programming more. +I personally  
HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME MOVIES DONE IN THEATERS THAT WERE AUDIO DESCRIBED, VIDEOS BORROWED WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTION, AND STAGE PERFORMANCES THAT WERE AUDIO DESCRIBED VIA SPECIAL RECEIVERS. IN EVERY SITUATION I FOUND MYSELF ON AN EQUAL LEVEL AND INFORMATION AS MY SIGHTED FRIENDS.

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## Anne Fesh

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**From:** The Rabbit [white\_rabbit2000@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 9:04 PM  
**To:** INFO@ACB.ORG  
**Subject:** i SUPPORT dvs

paul berthiaume  
P. O. Box 17187, Main Street kStation  
kWorcester, Massachusetts 01601-7187  
(508) 795-1118

kI would like to lend my support to the kFederal kCommunications Commission proposeed Descriptive Video rules, MM document 99-339 which would request the movie industry ass well aas Television networks and Cable TV to include descriptive audio track to their programming and all movies. I am totally blind, and find that when I am alone watching television, it is not always possible for me to know what is going on on the screen. It is my belief and feeling that I should have the same privileges as those who are sighted to not only to understand what is happening when there is no dialogue, as to know emotional reactions facially etc. It enhances my own independence to be able to share with others following a film or other program some of the eventsa going on that were not part of the dialogue. It also frees up other members of my household from having to spend their time describing what is happening and thus would make it possible for them to enjoy programming more. +I personally  
HAVWE EXPERIENCED SOME MOVIES DONE IN THEATERS THAT WERE AUDIO DESCRIBEDF, VIDEOS BORROWWED WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTRION, ANDS STAGE PERFORMANCES THAT WERE AUDIO DESCRIBED VIA SPECIAAL RECEIVERS. in EVERY SITUATION i FOUND MYSELF ON AN EQUAL LEVEL AND INFORMATION AS MY SIGHTED FRIENDS.

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## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Diane Bomar [dbomar@primenet.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2000 11:56 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I SUPPORT DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO

Leedy Diane Bomar  
2795 Tartan Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Phone: (719) 590-7073

I support descriptive video and MM docket 99-339.

As a young child, I didn't watch cartoons because I couldn't figure out what was going on. I can remember watching "101 Dalmatians" when it was first released in the early '60s and not understanding that the high voices were those of the puppies. Especially children do not have the experience to deduce what is going on by context and speech alone in a audiovisual medium. As an adult, I enjoy all kinds of movies, but am limited to those that are not too action oriented, due to the lack of audio description or clues. Though I often go to the movie theater alone, there have been many occasions when attending a movie with a friend or family member, that people seated near us are offended by my companion's quiet description of scenes that I could not figure out. DVS would provide more access to independence.

Leedy Diane Bomar

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Michael Byington [michael.byington@envisionus.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 24, 2000 12:15 AM  
**To:** 'info@acb.org'; 'ecfs@fcc.gov'; 'bkennard@fcc.gov'; 'sness@fcc.gov'; 'hfurchtg@fcc.gov';  
'mpowell@fcc.gov'; 'gtristan@fcc.gov'  
**Cc:** 'petersen@svpal.org'; 'japetersen@starpower.net'; 'dbmusic@cybernex.net';  
'mjmandel@compuserve.com'  
**Subject:** video discription

FRIENDS IN ART OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

REPLY TO:

Michael Byington, Vice President  
909 S. W. College Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66606

March 23, 2000

TO: THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC):

RE: DOCKET 99339 - REQUIREMENTS FOR VIDEO DESCRIPTION FOR  
TELEVISION

COMMENTS COMPILED BY A COMMITTEE COMPRISED OF:

Mike Mandel, President  
Jeaniece Petersen, Past President  
Michael Byington, Vice President  
Gordon Kent, Recording Secretary  
Roger Petersen, Board Member

Friends In Art (FIA) of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) is a membership organization affiliated with the ACB. Our membership is comprised of blind performance, visual, and literary artists who practice their art on a professional or amateur basis; blind patrons of the arts interested in arts and esthetics access; and family, friends, and interested arts professionals who have a commitment to access in the arts and in the promotion and encouragement of blind artists.

The above purposes and missions give us ample interest in the areas of video description, descriptive video, audio description of video materials, and of this form of provision of access under any other title.

We want to commend the FCC for soliciting comments and considering rules with regard to this subject. It is an area of access which has long needed to be addressed.

We do believe that video description is an equivalent access accommodation to closed captioning. It is essential that the United States move forward with plans to make video description at least as prevalent as closed captioning.

We patently disagree with the comments of the National Federation of the Blind when they suggest that video description is not essential from the perspective of providing access to entertainment materials. The Federation seems to give unqualified support only for use of video description in terms of providing emergency information. While we might agree that an oncoming tornado or hurricane is more important than the color and cut of a period dress, or who did it in the most recent television mystery, we would like to avoid a situation where information access as it relates to entertainment is considered less an ultimate goal than

information access regarding news or emergencies. Blind Americans have a right to equally effective communications with regard to ALL information. We have, or will soon have, the technology to make the provision of such information available. It simply therefore should and must be done.

At the same time, we are reasonable advocates, and we understand the projections of time constraints and financial concerns voiced by the television industry. Perhaps 50 hours of weekly programming including the availability of video description within 18 months is a bit too ambitious to be accomplished by the industry. A phase-in, perhaps starting with prime time programming 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven days a week (21 hours of programming per week) would be a better phase-in target, with the phase-in continuing to require increased duration within additional time

Also some of the smaller networks may not in fact have the technical capability to handle video description through the separate audio program (SAP) as quickly as the larger networks. There might be a slower phase-in of requirements for the smaller, more specialized networks.

Full compliance should be possible and should be mandated by the time the digital television standard is adopted, perhaps 2003. The ability to have several different SAP programs, as is provided through digital approaches, certainly makes logistics less complex.

While we are suggesting some reasonable revisions of the deadlines and a phase in of the mandates, make no mistake about the overall position of our organization. Video description must become a norm of television just as closed captioning has become a norm.

We must express surprise at the raising of Constitutional arguments by some of the commentators based on interpretations of the First Amendment. The concept seems to be that video description changes the nature of the artistic endeavor and therefore limits the freedom of speech of the artist or artists who created the original product. Video description is voluntary. The SAP channel can be turned on or off depending on whether the audio description track is desired. Video description does not change the nature of the initial art product. Video description provides simply a style of presentation of the art work. It is no different than the physical surroundings of a museum which may be presenting a show of fine master paintings. The environment makes a difference in the perception and enjoyment of the art, but the environment does not become the art.

The valid Constitutional argument is that several court decisions have made it clear that blind or other communications disabled individuals should not expect to experience less equally effective communications accommodations based on the purpose or content of those communications. To cause such a situation when the technology and means exists to remedy it is to cause undue censorship of materials to which the blind need access. Such censorship is quite clearly a violation of the First Amendment.

We are also concerned that the FCC has not addressed issues of access with regard to equipment design as it relates to accessible controls allowing blind Americans to activate the SAP feature on modern television sets, and access other menu driven features necessary to benefit fully from new, and particularly digital, television design. If the SAP is to be essential in choosing to use or not use video description, then blind people must readily have access to operate SAP related television controls. Non-talking, on screen menus do not allow for such access. These issues are not fully addressed through Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act. Not all television functions are considered to be a product of

telecommunications.

Band width and SAP allocations, as digital is developed, must make certain that there is adequate room for video description. More profitable uses of the SAP should not be allowed to squeeze out access accommodations such as video description.

In our discussion with some of our members who are blind performance artist, we are informed that these individuals depend on descriptions of clothing, style, and demeanor of television performers in order to know what is in vogue, what is within acceptable limits of behavior, what is selling, etc. Any person who is blind and who is attempting to blend well in to the society of our country must learn details concerning snapshots of what the mainstreamed press and entertainment media consider to be societal norms. For sighted individuals, right or wrong, good or bad, television is one of the most active exponents of these social facts and consequences. Blind Americans are asking for equal access, nothing more. As video description can be implemented and media part of our culture, requirements must be in place to make this happen. The requirements can be reasonable. They can take into account the small, new, struggling network. They can take into account that the development of the digital television standard may be intrinsic to full implementation of descriptive video. The goal on the overall path, however, must be one of moving ever closer to total access and total assurance of the provision of equally effective communications with regard to ALL types of communications.

FIA also feels that as the video description development and rulemaking process moves forward, it will be essential for the FCC to go beyond the solicitation of comments. FIA recommends that the FCC also establish an advisory body consisting of blind and visually impaired media savvy professionals and consumers to advise regularly throughout the development process. □



## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Frank Welte [fwelte@crl.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 3:06 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Cc:** acb-l@telepath.com  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

My name is Frank Welte. I am a blind American writing in support of the FCC's proposed rules requiring limited availability of descriptive video services, MM Docket No.99-339.

Deaf Americans have had the privilege of receiving closed caption television broadcasts for nearly a generation. Since our society has deemed it appropriate that deaf persons should have access to the audio component of television broadcasts it stands to reason that vision impaired persons should have access to the visual component of television broadcasts.

The arguments in opposition to the provision of descriptive video services by television broadcasters are notable only for their lack of substance.

Some opponents of DVS claim that it is prohibitively expensive. I have read that it costs about \$5,000 to add descriptions to a motion picture. In other words, it would cost producers of nationally broadcast television programs less than a penny per person per episode to make their programs (both the audio and video components) available to the millions of Americans with vision impairments. Public Television stations around the country have been providing DVS for years. If non-profit TV stations can afford to do this certainly profit-making stations and networks can do the same.

Some might argue that expanding DVS isn't technically possible. Again, the 10-year history of DVS usage by PBS exposes that lie for what it is.

Some misguided first amendment advocates claim that adding descriptions to programs would violate the free speech of their creators. I suppose this would be true if the creators of these programs deliberately chose to delete verbal descriptions of action scenes with the avowed purpose of preventing blind viewers from knowing what was going on on screen. Call me naive, but I doubt that anybody in the motion picture and television industry really wants to shut blind folks out of their programs. Some might say that the verbal descriptions could give blind viewers a distorted picture of the visual content of programs. If that is really a concern of the program creators they can simply write their own verbal descriptions into their screen play scripts. Their failure to do so would simply indicate that they trusted third party describers to provide accurate descriptions. If these producers really cared about whether blind folks got the correct interpretations of the visual portions of their works they'd support the use of audio descriptions prepared by trained describers rather than making us rely on the limited descriptive talents of parents, spouses, siblings, or friends as we must do at present.

Finally, I have heard that one group, the National Federation of the Blind, has falsely claimed that the blind community has little interest in DVS. As far as I know, the NFB hasn't surveyed the blind community on its feelings on this issue. They certainly never asked me about this issue. While the position of the NFB may reflect the views of its members this organization constitutes less than 10 percent of the blind population in America. Another large organization of blind people, the American Council of the Blind, strongly supports DVS. These claims that blind people aren't interested in described television remind me of the old excuses about wheelchair ramps and elevators being unnecessary in certain places of public accommodation because people in wheelchairs didn't visit those particular places. If your television came without a picture tube you might be less than enthusiastic about this evening's prime-time shows, but you'd change your mind once your set was repaired. After a half century blind Americans

have waited long enough for the TV repair person to call.

Frank Welte  
1432 San Carlos Ave. #6  
San Carlos, CA 94070-2205  
Phone: (650) 508-8329  
E-mail: fwelte@crl.com

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** paise@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Friday, March 24, 2000 8:24 AM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support the FCC proposed ruling for descriptive video.

Samantha Thomas  
POB 729  
Pine Level, NC 27568

I am blind and I support the FCC proposed ruling for descriptive video, MM  
Docket #99-339.

I would really appreciate having the same opportunity to enjoy television  
that the deaf community has had for the last 20-plus years.

Samantha Thomas

GDF-GRADS: Guide Dog Handlers making a difference  
<http://www.paisleyplace.com/gdf-grads/>

There is one quality which one must possess to win, and that is  
definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants, and a burning  
desire to possess it.

-Napoleon Hill

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** mary f short [shortmary@juno.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2000 7:09 AM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

I am Mary Frances Short, 1135 Battery Lane, Nashville, TN 37220. I am a high-school teacher at Tennessee School for the Blind. I do support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339.

shortmary@juno.com

**Anne Fesh**

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**From:** Joseph Perry [jcpperry@lazerlink.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 6:44 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video on television.

Joseph Perry  
1224 16th Ave.  
Altoona, 16601  
814-944-4217

I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video, Docket MM No.99-339. I do not accept from industry, broadcasters, or any others who have to do with television production that description for the blind cannot be done. It is being done by PBS and certain movie theaters. So, why can't it be done on commercial television. I think it's only fair that blind people have the same rights as their sighted peers in this regard. I know that there are a lot of other blind and visually impaired individuals who feel the same as I do about this matter.

3/15/2000

## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Kristal Hagemoser-Platt [kplatt@unmc.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 12:21 PM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

March 15, 2000

Dear Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission:

On behalf of the Greater Omaha Chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, I am writing to voice our support for the Federal Communications Commission proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339. We are members of a consumer advocacy organization, comprised primarily of blind and visually impaired persons. We are committed to improving the living conditions of blind and visually impaired individuals by promoting our independence and effective participation as citizens in all aspects of society.

We feel strongly that video description is needed for ALL programming not just what other people think we should know. Please continue to work to ensure our full access to television programming.

Sincerely,

Kristal Platt, M.S.  
President  
Greater Omaha Chapter  
American Council of the Blind of Nebraska  
PO Box 335 DTS  
Omaha NE 68101

**Anne Fesh**

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**From:** Kristal Hagemoser-Platt [kplatt@unmc.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 11:59 AM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** I support descriptive video

I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339. As a blind woman I need the information from television programming made accessible for me to participate fully in society. The information that other people take for granted is not available to me. For instance, if I need information such as a phone number, sports scores, and weather warnings, I currently need a sighted person to read it to me; this is NOT satisfactory.

Thank you for the efforts you have made to make the proposed rules cover the needs of the blind and visually impaired.

Sincerely,

Kristal Platt, M.S.  
2609 S 50 St  
Omaha NE 68106

**Anne Fesh**

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**From:** K M Lyons [khaki@wzrd.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 11:07 AM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** "I support descriptive video"

I am legally blind. I am writing in support of the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339.

These proposed rules would bring equal access to viewers with visual impairment.

Kathleen M Lyons  
29 Rand Ave.  
Buffalo, N Y 14216-3314  
(716) 873 0001  
e-mail khaki@wzrd.com



## Anne Fesh

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**From:** Ralph Manganiello [rmanganiello@envisionus.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2000 10:57 AM  
**To:** info@acb.org  
**Subject:** "I support descriptive video"

I support descriptive video's for people who are blind or visually impaired. Reference FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339. I am visually impaired.

Ralph Manganiello  
413 N. Knight  
Wichita, KS 67203